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ART. V.—1. *The H—— Family.* By FREDERIKA BREMER. Boston : James Munroe & Co. 12mo. pp. 212.

2. *The President's Daughters, a Narrative of a Governess.* By FREDERIKA BREMER, Authoress of "The Neighbours." Translated from the Swedish. Boston : James Munroe & Co. 12mo. pp. 230.

3. *The Home, or Family Cares and Family Joys.* By FREDERIKA BREMER. Translated from the Swedish, by MARY HOWITT. New York : Harper & Brothers. 8vo. pp. 134.

THAT kind of fiction, of which these works are a most favorable example, has gained so firm a hold upon the public taste, that it is now the most common recreation in civilized lands, and has become so essential to the intellectual enjoyment of many persons, that they can relish nothing less exciting. The writers whom the people most delight to honor are writers of fiction, and much less fervent reverence is paid to those who deal in truth. Some think it necessary to administer truth in the disguise of fiction, in order to make it go down. When the young mind opens, fiction is the first thing which it learns to love ; and a taste is thus early created, which it retains, and which has an effect to color its character and destiny in many future years.

When the use of fiction is become so general, it would be of no use to argue against it, and we propose to do no such visionary thing. The imagination is part of our nature, for wise purposes, no doubt ; and as long as these purposes are defined and kept in view, there can be little danger. Amusement is one of these purposes ; not the highest, certainly, but still one of them ; the mind cannot be always on the stretch ; the bow must be unstrung at times, and entertainment at such times is of service to the mind and heart. If fiction is occasionally used for this purpose, to lift up into the world of fancy one who is tired of walking in the dusty road of existence, the indulgence may be of service to the mind and not injurious to the heart.

But obviously there is danger of excess in this indulgence. These luxuries must not be the daily bread of the mind. For the effect of these fictions on the mind closely

resembles that of stimulating food upon the body ; it is agreeable, no doubt, for such food is eagerly devoured ; and the occasional use of them, like the moderate use of food of that description, may do no harm, for it is possible to live too low. But when we come to the constant and habitual use of either, it is ruinous, in the one case to the physical, in the other to the intellectual system ; and whoever cares for the health of body or mind will hold them in sufficient dread, at least, to keep himself out of bondage.

It is the tendency of this taste to become excessive and engrossing ; it grows and gains fast upon the other appetites and tendencies of the mind. Some will say, What if it does ? We answer, that single fact proves it to be an unhealthy taste, and one which cannot be indulged without injury and danger. It is in this as in other things. To use an illustration sufficiently familiar, the appetite for bread and water is a natural and healthy one ; there is no tendency to use either of them to excess ; the constant use of them inflames no passion which it will afterwards be hard to put down. But not so with the desire for stimulating food and drink ; it tends at once to excess, and this tendency is proof enough of an unhealthy appetite which it is dangerous to indulge. There is no danger that the taste for true history shall ever become excessive ; it is healthy in itself, and indicates right action in the intellect. One who reads habitually what is true, can at times resort to fiction with pleasure ; while the habitual reader of fiction cannot interest himself in simple and unexciting truth ; a bad sign ; because the mind in its right state will always welcome truth with satisfaction.

Besides being unhealthy, this taste displaces others, better than itself. There is one among our feathered tribes which always lays its egg in the nest of some smaller bird. As soon as the young cow-bird is hatched, though it has no enmity with the lawful heirs, the nest is soon found too narrow to hold them all, and the result is, that the smaller go overboard, and the offspring of the thief is left the sole possessor ; — an exact parallel to the manner in which the love of fiction takes a piratical and exclusive possession of the mind. It is edifying, sometimes, to hear worthy parents boast, that their young hopefuls are great readers ; but if, on inquiry, they find that it is fiction in which these promising ones are so deeply engaged, they might as well boast

that their children devour great quantities of confectionary, as a proof that they are healthy, and likely to continue so, as infer, from the amount of fiction which they swallow, that their minds are in the way to improve. In the one case, the young *gourmand* will become diseased, and have no relish for the food which would make him strong ; in the other, those bright young sparks will show, when it comes to reading for improvement, that they have no more heart for it, than he who drinks intemperately, has for water from the mountain spring.

The chief danger arises from the fact, that the mind is passive in this kind of reading. In reading for improvement, it is not so. In that operation the mental powers are active ; many questions start up ; new trains of thought are awakened ; instead of tamely receiving the communications of the writer, the mind originates ideas of its own. This is the great benefit of such exercise ; no one remembers a thousandth part of what he has read ; the advantage is found less in the direct attainments so made, than in the vigor and activity awakened and sustained in the mind. But in reading for amusement, the intellect originates no thoughts and gains no new power of action ; it subsides rather into a luxurious, dreamy state, resembling that produced by narcotics, whereby all intellectual and moral energy is lost, and self-indulgence reigns omnipotent within. It is more pleasant, no doubt, to sail over smooth waters without effort of one's own, than to foot it on the rough highway ; but the tenant of the pleasure-boat gains no exercise, and grows weary to death of his perpetual happiness ; the wayfarer, after his first weariness is over, enjoys the sensation of full health ; one of the most delightful which it is given to man to know.

There cannot be much force, then, in the impression that good moral instruction may be conveyed in a fictitious form. Given, no doubt, it may be ; but whether it will be taken or not is a different question, not to be so confidently answered. Experience on this subject abounds. The most common aim of such writing is, to excite the benevolent affections. But the utmost it ever does is to excite some tender emotions, which never become principles, nor very efficient impulses ; there is a slight melting of the ice in the sunbeam, but when the light is withdrawn, it freezes as hard as ever. Now these emotions, which do not lead to action, grow less

and less each time they are repeated ; the tears, perhaps, are shed as usual, since they cost nothing, but the heart becomes so cold, that if any are in need of relief, one of these weeping-willow philanthropists is the last person to whom they would go. Nothing can touch his feelings but graceful and interesting distress ; and as all real suffering has something coarse and distasteful in it, he reserves his sympathy for imaginary sorrows, and, where nothing is wanted, he is perfectly ready to bestow. This morality of fiction, as might be expected, produces only a fictitious benevolence ; and if this reading be only a self-indulgence, to expect self-denial to grow out of it is as reasonable as to look for strawberries on snow.

The mind, being thus passive in reading fiction, is exposed to injurious influences, which, if it were in action, it could hardly feel. The health of the mind is analogous to that of the physical system, and depends on similar laws. Let a man be exposed to the evening air in an unhealthy climate ; there is no danger while he is in motion ; but once let him sit down to gaze at the moonlight as it sleeps sweetly on the landscape, and he will breathe in disease with the fragrance of the flowers ; still more, if he slumbers under the serene influence of the hour, it is almost certain that his days are numbered. The enjoyment of this kind of reading is attended with similar danger ; it has a soothing and peaceful effect ; one cannot persuade himself that peril is near ; but certain it is, that his moral health will sink under the influence of the pestilent scribbler whose works he reads ; the sensibility of his conscience will be impaired ; his hatred of guilt and unworthiness will be put to sleep, and his heart will welcome suggestions which formerly he would have repelled with fear and shame.

It may be said, however, that all writers of fiction are not of this description. It is true, they are not, and well for the world that it is so. The best and most eminent of them do not stoop to licentiousness and corruption. But many of them are persons who will descend to any thing for the sake of effect ; having too little principle to care for, or even to be conscious of, the injury they do, they can, by means of a temporary popularity, spread the infection among thousands, simply because the minds of their readers are too passive to understand their danger. Thus there are those whose whole employment seems to be to turn vice into virtue, and shame

into glory, till all moral distinctions are worn away by the perpetual dropping, and the blindfolded reader will accept some poor knave as not only a gentleman and man of honor, but high-souled, whole-hearted, and whatever other fair name, taken in vain for the purpose, these conscientious people think proper to bestow. These men, from Byron down to Bulwer, and many a fathom down it is, have labored to represent human nature, when defiled, degraded, and passion-stained, as more elevated than before its fall ; Herod, eaten of worms, as more graceful and commanding than Solomon in all his glory. There cannot be a more impudent affront to the common sense of mankind. The artist might as well maintain that the drunkard's redness is more beautiful than the school-boy's bloom, or the features wasted by sensuality more honorable than the soldier's battle-scars. It is all a base fraud ; it is neither according to truth nor nature ; the delusion contaminates the heart that gives it welcome ; it conducts many a youth to a wretched life, a lonely prison, an untimely grave, or, perhaps, to the pirate's doom.

Happily there are not many writers of this description, though there are some who have been admired by men who might know better ; but if the majority are of a higher order, it is unfortunately true of the best of them, that they create a taste for fiction which can only be fed with fiction. Let a youth begin with the most unexceptionable writers, who would scorn to prostitute their talents to licentious uses ; still, the more he is fascinated by them, the more does his taste for such excitement grow. Once created, this appetite soon loses its moral taste and power of selection ; it will demand, and it will have, indulgence ; it can no longer appreciate works of high moral beauty, and it will swallow all that comes in its way, without regard to either character or effect. The epicure may begin with champagne ; so long as it exhilarates, he will ask for nothing stronger ; but when it ceases to excite, he will go on to the coarsest products of the still. In the same way do even such writers as Scott create this taste, which is not satisfied when their works are exhausted, and, instead of turning to any thing really valuable and improving, takes up with Irish whisky, like Jack Hinton, or those writings of Ainsworth, which are most aptly represented by New England rum ; leaving us to bless our stars, however, that our climate, while it rejoices in the one

commodity, has not, as yet, produced any thing like the other.

With respect to the indications of danger, it is sufficient to say, that where the taste for reading for improvement is lost, there is injury already done. The reader may throw by the news and the novels of the day to ascertain how essential they are to his enjoyment ; whether he is dull and listless without them ; or whether he can turn with animated interest to works of a different order, such as put the mind into action and send a healthy glow through every part. If he finds that it gives him no pleasure to exert his powers, that improvement has no attraction, and that he turns to his fiction like the intemperate man to his glass, he may well regard himself as already in the perilous position, where many fine minds have been ruined by self-indulgence. It is owing to this, that so few persons think. Their minds play and float on various subjects ; but they may as well call drumming with their fingers bodily exercise, as give the name of thinking to reverie and waking dreams, which, so far from amounting to action, oftener show that the power of action is lost.

But we have said enough on this subject ; enough, probably, if our subscribers were of the younger class of people, to diminish materially the circulation of the Review. If any one of them should be conscientious enough to read our remarks, and should be, like old Transfer, in "*Zeluco,*" willing to hear reason when he has made up his mind, he will see that, with impartiality quite unusual in reviewers, we have presented both sides of the subject in this and in a former number ; so that if, after all, he is still dissatisfied, the fault cannot be ours. We think it matter of congratulation, that the kings and queens in this department of literature, have been blameless in proportion to their genius. That power so mighty should be lodged in safe and conscientious hands, considering the waywardness of talent, was hardly to be expected. Still it has been so ; and though there has been an instance here and there of some adventurer, who has succeeded in gaining influence and even admiration, without any thing in his mind and heart which really deserved it, the world find him out at last, and turn their backs on him without ceremony, taking ample vengeance not only for his vices, but for their own blindness, which they remember with wrath and shame.

Scott must certainly take the first place among writers of fiction, though there are defects in his writings which were not perceived in the dazzle of his living renown. His understanding was vigorous and manly ; though under the influence of many traditional impressions and prejudices, it was not because he wanted sagacity to see through them, but because strong family and patriotic attachments made him willing to invite and cherish the delusion. Take him in the broad highway of life, and no man could judge more truly, no man's vision was clearer and sharper than his ; but with his foot on his native soil, and his ear drinking in its enchanting legends of story and song, he could admire such a savage as Claverhouse, with only the thin veil of chivalry to cover his bloody hands, while he had no voice of cheering for those who stood up under intolerable oppression to fight the battles of the free. Hedged in as he was by early associations, he became too ready a slave to those creeds which go down from one generation to another, venerated by their friends in proportion as they are suspected by others, till the world at once awakes to a universal sense of their hollowness, and they sink unlamented in the dust. In this he differs from Shakspeare, whose kings, lords, and prelates were men,—good or bad men as the case might be ; with whom the man was always more than the office or the title, and no robe nor mantle hid the outline and proportions of the moral form. With this abatement, the highest praise can be given to Scott for his healthy tone of moral sentiment ; it might seem light praise in Christian lands to say, that he is free from every thing licentious and corrupting ; but it is much to keep the garments white, where so many have been stained ; where the great genius, which, for a time, eclipsed his own,—we mean Byron,—left a memory in which the glory bears but a small proportion to the shame.

The same praise is due to Miss Edgeworth, who stands second only to that great master ; her fame thus far has found many critics, but none that can fairly claim to be rivals. In her works we find much of the true philosophy of life, if we may use a phrase which has figured in so many antic combinations, that it is almost ashamed of its meaning. Her analysis of character is full of discrimination, and her detection of secret motives and impulses sufficiently keen and searching ; in fact, the sagacity with which she detects

the hidden movements of the heart, setting the moral before the reader in a few words of concentrated wisdom, sometimes makes her seem deficient in that tenderness for poor humanity which its sins and weaknesses should ever awaken, and which such minds should be the readiest to feel. In such a story as Vivian, for example, which is, perhaps, the most powerful of her sketches, nothing can be finer than the manner in which she points out the unconscious frailty with which resolution sinks into infirmity of purpose, and thus leads on to hopeless guilt and dishonor. In the power of moral impression she is quite unrivalled, owing, in great part, to her singleness of aim and effort; while a person of considerable promise, like Miss Martineau, believing herself to be a world's convention of all manner of gifts, exerts her powers in so many directions that she contrives to excel in none, Miss Edgeworth presents her morals, patriotism, and political economy, in that form where she is always at home, and thus makes and fixes impressions by light suggestions, where solemn discussions would not be regarded. In her day, sympathy with human nature was not, as it is now, a chief element in the popularity of distinguished writers; but the consciousness which she seems to have, that the deepest fountains of interest may be found in the valleys of life, the warmth of pleasure with which she describes lowly dwellings and their tenants, with the glory and joy of virtue thrown around them, and the familiar ease with which she gives them their places among the great and high, will secure her renown in coming ages, when men shall deal more in the realities of life, and be less enslaved to the outward show.

But we have no time to allude particularly to those who, in our own and other countries, have made themselves eminent by their success in fiction; not even to Bulwer, who, by dint of a certain air, established himself as the Brummel of literature, though his only conception of gentlemen seemed to be, that they were people manufactured by the tailor, and therefore he saw no reason why thieves and murderers, properly dressed, should not sustain that character as well as better men. Nor can we dwell on a later and more deserving favorite of the public, who, after being over estimated, is in danger of being placed below his proper station, and to a far greater degree. His gifts are of that kind which tell with great force upon the public mind; a rich vein of humor,

though not by any means of the purest, a quick observation of character, and a bold and free hand to set it down, and, what is more, a ready sympathy with human nature in all its aspects and abodes, made him popular almost without example ; men expressed their enthusiasm in a manner which they were sure to be ashamed of a little while after, and then, instead of rejoicing that they have hearts to be so easily moved, they wreak their resentment upon the innocent writer, whose works have betrayed them into such overflowing exhibitions of delight. Now they begin to perceive, what is true indeed, that his characters are somewhat excessive and overdone ; that such persons as Squeers and Quilp never had their originals in nature ; that the writer has not sufficient resources to supply the constant drain ; and that the manner in which he dashes off his opinions on many grave subjects shows that he has been at no expense of thought about such matters. Still, if he has patience to bear the reverses incident to the life of every popular writer, and can escape the acid fermentation which always indicates the swift decay of fame, he may yet assume a place above this capricious public taste, which none can venture to defy, but which real merit is sure to carry with it as pioneer and trumpeter at last.

Meantime, another competitor has stepped into the field, and from a quarter where nothing of the kind was expected ; but though the scenes of Miss Bremer are laid in the North, and her views of social life savor strongly of local peculiarity, she is not a painter of manners ; her characters are not Swedes, but men and women, and, those traits which are common to mankind being so finely traced and brought out, they are welcomed, not as persons figuring on a stage, nor as moving shapes in a diorama, but as human beings, such as we have often met ; such, indeed, as we meet wherever we go. She seems to describe her own mind and feelings in the sketch of one of those sensible and affectionate women, who go into a family with a ready sympathy for all its members, and inspire such confidence at once, that every heart turns its open side toward them. She is not blinded to substantial merit by the rough word or hasty action ; in the young she can see gleams of promise through the offensive peculiarities of childhood, and she can exert that forbearance toward the old, which disarms all angry passion ; keeping the

waters of life, by her own unconscious influence, all clear and smooth about her, she is able, without effort, to see far below the surface, and to trace what is not manifest to common eyes. She has the courage to paint life as it is ; as Shakspeare shuffled clowns and kings together, she takes her reader at once from the parlour to the kitchen, showing in the same view the preparations for dinner and the fermenting elements of tragic passion in the household ; the fretful impatience at one moment of those who can be great and self-denying at another ; and painting to the life those half laughing tears and those self-consoling sorrows, together with those battles of the secret heart, which would make men's lives scenes of thrilling interest to any eye that could look them through. In this department she excels all who have gone before her ; and, however loose and disjointed her stories may be ; though all the unities of time, place, and character may at times be furiously disregarded, one who reminds the reader so often of what passes in his own life and his own heart is sure of that affectionate and grateful interest, which is far more enviable than any amount of profit or popular fame.

Miss Bremer, in a letter to Mrs. Howitt, expresses wonder that her works should have interest in England which is so rich in romance already. It is not the romance of her works which gives them their attraction ; on the contrary, where the picture of every-day life is so exactly presented, the romantic materials which she interweaves are out of place and unwelcome. They are like one of Mrs. Radcliffe's horrible war-figures set up in a common drawing-room, or a ghost exchanging compliments with living people. In "*The Neighbours*," every one is oppressed with the fierce romance of Hagar, whose character and presence seem always odious and unnatural, and whose confessions, though relied upon to clear up the reputation of Bruno, leave it, after all, about as dark as before. Bruno himself goes to the utmost bound of romantic propriety ; we cannot help feeling that the return of the Prodigal Son is more according to truth and nature ; and lament that the happiness of Serena should be intrusted to such wayward hands ; but even he is far less oppressive to our faith than Elizabeth in "*The H—— Family*," who is as unfit for any purpose of interest in a story of common life as a volcano for a mound in a pleasure-garden. Such female

Giaours may possibly be found in Oriental regions, but are utterly unsuited to the high northern latitudes in which the scene of the story is laid. In "The President's Daughters," there is a different kind of person, a sort of genius, who is happily removed to Rome by a benevolent friend, early in the progress of the story, much to her own, and not less so to the reader's satisfaction, leaving him to travel in peace and comfort to the close. In ordinary stories, these materials would answer well enough, because there is not sufficient probability and truth to nature to put them to shame ; but for one who deals so familiarly with home and the heart, and whose great power is shown in the profound interest which she can give to common things, we feel that these theatrical pageants are unsuitable and unworthy.

We have nothing to add to our former remarks on the subject of "The Neighbours," a work admirably suited to herald forth a new literary name. It has passed at once into a popularity more general than it has often been the lot of such a story to secure, having interest not only for childhood and youth, but for a large class of maturer readers, who had long since laid fiction aside, and never expected to see an inducement to return to it again. Since the public always require that each new appearance of a favorite writer shall be more brilliant than the last, it was not to be expected that "The H—— Family" should come up to that somewhat unreasonable demand ; accordingly, though with the advantage of some striking scenes, and an excellent translation, it has been accepted as an imperfect sketch, rather than a work, and as such has been admitted to considerable favor ; not placed in the same rank with "The Neighbours," indeed, but regarded as sustaining the author's high reputation.

"The H—— Family" opens with an unpretending scene, in which a custom-house officer sustains the chief part ; and incidental and careless though it is, such a picture shows, better than more labored ones, the spirit, power, and kind sympathies of the writer. It is needless to do more than name what every reader remembers. The traveller is interested in the appearance of the red-nosed officer, coldly civil and respectful though he is, in the discharge of an unpleasant duty. At first, she was disposed to quarrel with him, on account of that duty ; but the cold nose, the sad

expression, his four children, the snow-storm, all passing before her, changed her feeling into kindness and desire to serve him. When he took off his hat to her at parting, she would fain have stopped the sleigh to make him a present ; but that sort of irresolution, which every one understands, prevented her doing so, and the opportunity was lost. As soon as she arrives in the cheerful parlour, and sits down at the well furnished table, the transition from the storm without to the happy scene within fills her with delight, till the vision of the frozen nose places itself before her, as an upbraiding to her conscience, and nothing else can she see. Who is there that has not reproached himself thus for losing some opportunity of serving others, and consoled himself, in like manner, by one of those promises for to-morrow, which are so easily made, though it is not on record that any one of them was ever redeemed ?

This whole story unfolds to us some of the realities which are found in the living letter ; and we are well persuaded that even the anfractuosities, as Dr. Johnson calls them, are not only according to truth, but were drawn from living nature ; such, for example, as the misgivings of the eldest daughter just before her marriage with a man every way calculated to make her happy, while she insists upon it that she shall be miserable, and determines to separate, after the manner of him who would cure the headache by amputation ; — and the case of Julia, for a time praising the looks of her *nonchalant* and hearty suitor, and persuading herself that she loved him, till she becomes conscious of those wants of the mind and spirit, which sometimes make themselves felt where they are not understood, and finds it necessary to her happiness to remove the graceful form in favor of the heart and soul. In reference to such connexions and separations, and the means of preventing needless alienation in those who have embarked for life together, the lessons given in this work, or rather thrown into it, are of exceeding value, and could only have come from a most thoughtful and wise observer. Nothing can be better described than the change in Julia's feelings. Before her sister's marriage, she could not bear that the service should be performed by one so horribly serious and ugly as Professor L—— ; but when her mind begins to open to a consciousness of its nature and destiny, the warm-hearted eloquence and virtue of the Pro-

fessor, the high sentiments which he awakened, and the lessons of duty and spiritual life which he taught, make her impatient of the vapid epicureanism of her handsome lover ; nor is her dissatisfaction lessened by his indecorous snore during the reading of a passage from Herder, which brings the color to her cheek and the tears into her eye. Convinced that she could never endure to be an oyster on the sand-bank of life, and that the oyster-eater was not much higher in the scale of being, she parts from her lover without breaking his heart, or spoiling his appetite, and becomes a proud and happy tenant of the humble dwelling of the Professor.

We cannot say that we greatly delight in the foreign family with which Cornet Charles allies himself, and of the episode of Elizabeth we have already expressed an unfavorable opinion. There is too broad a daylight in these works for such things to be seen to advantage ; and the wonder is, how so perfectly natural a taste can have thought it well to introduce them. When the said Cornet, in his wild love-chase, is pursued by the frolicsome party into the store-room, frantic with grief and perplexity though he is, the sight of provisions makes him hungry, and Miss Bremer permits him to eat, where an ordinary romance-writer would sooner have died upon the spot. When Beata looks for the kind-hearted Madam H. in her bedroom, she finds her prayer-book open on the sofa, its pages wet with tears, while the proprietor thereof is in the kitchen, reproofing the cook for neglecting to prepare the cutlets from the breast of lamb ; this is, sad to say, in perfect accordance with truth and nature, and also with the spirit of one of Galt's characters, who, on a mourning occasion, remarked "If a' mankind were dead, so that there was but ae person left in the world, ye ken that man maun hae his dinner." Many such touches there are, which evidently came from real life ; witness the tart, concerning which it pleased the Colonel to observe that, "after he had eaten a piece, it oppressed him a little. You never know what oppresses people ; men have curious notions." The closing scene of the Provost's widow is excellent in its way, reminding us of the best part of "*The Neighbours*" ; but the glory of the book is the solemn earnestness of the little Thickeys, when they have undertaken to dig through the solid globe, and are deterred, not

by any misgivings as to the feasibility of the enterprise, but by the fear of falling through when the work is done. Surely, if the book were otherwise unworthy of the author of "The Neighbours," which we do not think is the case, except so far as it has less effort and pretension, this passage would be enough to redeem it.

The character of Helen in this work is one in which the author delights, and with reason; for no other writer, that we remember, has ventured to draw a sketch of those admirable persons, who, cut off by infirmity and plainness of person from sharing the enjoyments of others, instead of being soured by the privation, enter with the warmest interest into the joys and sorrows of others; commanding respect by that self-balanced repose of character which implies firmness and strength, and inspiring affection to a degree which none are fully conscious of, till their places know them no more. The choice of such characters, and the heart which the author throws into the portrait, show that she has that sense of moral beauty, where it is not set off by accidental advantages, which is one of the highest traits of intellectual elevation, and which gives her immense power to do good in a way which few others have travelled, and which few, perhaps, have ever known. We see something of it, indeed, in Scott's picture of Jeanie Deans, where the subject was not of his own finding, but was furnished to his hands; but even there, we think, most observing readers are conscious that the writer attached too much importance to those adventitious distinctions in which the guilty sister abounds, so that, whatever he may say of the inward happiness of the one, and the perpetual uneasiness of the other,—and he could not say more than was true,—the external condition eclipses the reality, and the lesson is not so deeply impressed as is desirable on the reader's mind and heart.

The Governess of the President's daughters holds as favorable a place for observation, as Beata in the H—— family; her warm sympathy with her charge gives her a true insight into their characters, and the means of drawing out the better elements of their natures; though her method does not harmonize entirely with the traditional rules of the President's lost and blessed wife, which, out of respect to her memory, he treats as the perfection of common sense, never to be swerved from, whether right or wrong. The President him-

self is finely drawn, with his polish of manners and real kindness of heart, blended with unconscious epicureanism and a solemn tone of moralizing, curiously contrasted with real thoughtlessness and self-delusion. Real life must have furnished the original of the gracious person, who sat eating heartily at the table, and saying, at the same time, “How little does man require in order to make him happy!” The scene of the hair-cutting, and his wrath and distress at discovering the unusual manner in which she had sheared his locks, is another of those passages which seem like the daily journal of a household, not intended for publication. It is a masterly and characteristic argument, in which the Governess, while she resists his wishes on the subject of his daughter, unfolds to him her views respecting the formation of character, to which he has nothing to oppose save the maxims of the blessed Presidentess repeated in various forms of words, all showing that, while he thought it necessary to be deliberate and conscientious on the subject, he had never really thought any thing about the matter.

The great point of interest in this work is the transformation of Edla, from a sullen and discontented spirit into an affectionate daughter and cheerful member of the circle. It is not in all respects happily managed ; but any defect in the detail is of little importance compared with the idea, which affords the key at once to nine tenths of the misery of life, and shows, too, where the remedy may be found. There are many minds with powers which have found no inducement to exertion, and hearts with affections not yet unfolded in light and love ; and these elements of our nature, which were intended to spread the rich glow of happiness through it, become by their stagnation a burden and a curse to their possessor. If any means can be devised to put the slumbering mind into action, and to warm the chilled heart with the fervor of its own motions, the listless, unsocial, heavy-hearted being will be transformed into a messenger of sympathy and goodness, carrying sunshine wherever she goes. Edla is represented as inferior in personal appearance to her sisters, and, from the sense that she is not valued, unwilling to exert herself for others, and shrinking proudly back from their advances within the dark walls of her own heart. Her father looks on her as undutiful and thankless, not being able to sympathize with the feelings which he could not understand.

And thus a consumption of the mind and heart was gaining fast upon her, spreading inward to the house of moral and spiritual life ; a complaint, which, though it is not named in the books, is fearfully common. When physical disease affects the frame, it is plain to every eye ; but no external sign betrays the hectic flush which indulgence has brought upon the mind ; no blackness of the surface indicates the process of death within ; and thus the human being knows not when his spirit is dead to the strongest claims and obligations ; he is conscious of unhappiness only, and that he considers others responsible for, and believes it in their power to remove it. Here, then, is the great error ; to deny the plant the nourishment and sunshine convenient to its nature, and yet wonder, that instead of blooming, its leaves should wither and fall ;—ascribing to the elements or to the rough handling of others that which is owing only to neglect. The upas in the moral world is no fiction ; there is such a plant in many a garden, near which nothing else can grow. Now the first thing is to set the mind in action, and the inducement which shall be presented to it must depend on its own nature. The author would not recommend Plato to every unhappy daughter ; there are those to whom other studies would offer more attraction, and do more good. The only object is to lift up the intellectual nature from the low place in which it lies, that it may have light to see around it and within. This the author truly regards as indispensable, and all efforts without it are as useless as setting right the hands of a timepiece which does not go.

Count Alaric is a well drawn, though not particularly pleasing, character ; high-minded, refined, and fastidious ; impatient of the follies of others, not because he has none himself, but simply because his own are of a different description ; and yet likely to be loved to excess by such a person as Adelaide, from her admiration of the oaken strength of his heart, contrasted with the gentle weakness of her own. Concerning Otto, the less that is said, indeed the less that he says, the better. But Adelaide is a beautiful picture of female loveliness ; and we cannot but regard it as an evidence of the writer's truth to nature, that while the one, with all his excellence, is too rigid and exacting, and the other painfully sensible to every thing like coldness and alienation, she should have thought it possible for an affection to exist

which should soften the one and give energy to the other, and thus make them entirely one. On the whole, “*The President’s Daughters*” is the least pleasing of these works, though it is not deficient in passages of great interest, affords much practical instruction for the conduct of life, and would be enough to make the fortune of almost any other writer.

The most finished of these stories is that which has last reached us. We do not mean that it is more interesting than “*The Neighbours*,” in which the story is told by one of the characters of the novel, and is beautifully colored by the peculiarities of the imaginary narrator. But as a work of art, consistent in all its parts, and with each naturally related to the whole ; with characters gradually unfolding themselves through the circumstances into which they are thrown, and in such a manner as to illustrate the writer’s favorite principle of the omnipotence of love ; with the power to chain attention by the deep tragedy of real life, while the small daily circumstances, which are so little regarded, are made by their improvement or abuse to work out the happiness or desolation of the heart ; with its life-like illustrations of the great truth of Christianity, that evil can never be subdued with evil, while it can always be overcome with good,—this unpretending story must be regarded as one of the best and happiest tributes which literature has ever paid to humanity. It deserves not only to be admired, but pondered and studied by all who would understand the true wisdom of life, and escape those cares and sorrows which men bring on themselves, and which are by far the heaviest that ever oppress the heart. Our countrywoman, Miss Sedgwick, has rendered the same service on a smaller scale, with her usual ability ; but this work of Miss Bremer covers the whole ground, showing what may be made of life, and what a home should be ;—not a place where the person is protected from the elements, a fire kindled in winter, and the daily table spread ; but a place, rather, where the wants of the heart may find their best gratification in a sanctuary of kind affections, and the mind secure that contented repose which so many imagine, but comparatively few are fortunate enough to know.

The usual way in which the novel-writer exercises poetical justice is, to cause a golden shower to fall upon the favored ones of the story. The little Petrea, in her first attempt at romance, unconsciously caught the very spirit of

the art, when she described the lovers as at length happily married and established, and having eight children in one year. Such prosperity is not common in real life ; and the manner in which the novel-reader always looks for external rewards of virtue shows the necessary effect of his indulgence to make him insensible to all unseen things. This author, on the contrary, shows that there is no need of smiting a rock in the wilderness to supply the thirst of the heart. So far as outward things have any concern with it, no spring-floods of good fortune are necessary for the purpose ; if the mind is kept in action, and the affections unchilled by selfishness, every day of life may be a high festival of gladness, because, when the power of enjoyment is kept in order, the means of enjoyment are never wanting. The great truth, that happiness depends on what we are, and not on what we have ; that when the spirit is kept in tune, the harmonies of nature and of life will always be listened to with delight ; that to be at peace with ourselves, with others, and with God, brings out those full organ-tones of glory and love on which the soul floats as on the ocean, upborne from all things unworthy, and brought continually nearer to the skies ; this truth, which cannot well be expressed in words,—our own are none of the clearest,—is here manifested in living action, by setting before us the daily life of an affectionate and united family, where all discordant elements are soon melted down into union, irregular desires and sympathies reclaimed from their wandering, and even traits of fixed character, which have taken their direction for years, are affected, like the glacier in the sunshine, by the irresistible power of love.

In the two heads of this family is beautifully shown the improving influence which two persons may exert on each other, when put into communication by mutual respect and love. The scene opens with a difference about a trifle, as the most serious differences of such persons are apt to be respecting trifles, because their tempers are unguarded. The Judge hastily proposes some improvement which his busy nature suggests, and which her acquiescent turn of mind is not prepared to welcome. She is too gentle, and, indeed, too indifferent to the matter, to oppose ; but she expresses her opinion in precisely the way most calculated to irritate a temper like his. With such elements of dis-

cord, which, being within themselves, must be constantly present, nothing could prevent the result, at no distant time, of entire alienation, except a cultivation of that affection which each had pledged to the other, and which, like a winter fire, must be kept burning with care, or it will soon leave nothing but cold ashes. In many cases, these tragical consequences follow ; the selfish coldness, where love might as well exist, gains upon each party, till the heavy chill of indifference prevails in every part of the dwelling, making it as desolate as the grave. But in the case before us, the wife studies out the strong excellences in the character of her husband, and learns to value and forgive ; while he, in turn, is made more and more sensible of her gentle and generous loveliness, because her virtue is of a kind so different from his own. Meantime, each is unconsciously doing much to form the other ; his impatient energy is daily softened into a graceful tenderness by an influence which she is not aware of exerting ; and her mild spirit, which naturally inclined to sentimental dreaming, is nerved to power and self-reliance, which otherwise she could not have reached, by her deep sympathy with the man she loves. Thus the very peculiarities of character, which threatened the ruin of their peace and joy, are changed, by the influence of conscience and of love, into the means of improvement, and thus far of happiness ; since it is ordained by the law which stands for ever, that goodness and happiness shall be one.

The same lesson is taught by the change in Leonora. Depressed, as she was, by ill health and the conscious want of beauty, she was fast sinking into a sullen misanthropy, when the self-denying affection of her sister Eva touched the spring of good feeling in her heart, and her whole destiny was changed from discontent and sorrow into light and love. The beauty of Eva, on the contrary, as often happens in real life, had nearly become the cause of her wretchedness, by bringing her heart into bondage to one of those worthless libertines who deceive others into affection of which they themselves are utterly unworthy. When her mind becomes diseased, in consequence of separation from her lover, it is the perpetual influence of domestic love which restores the tone to her heart, and enables her once more to exert her powers and affections, and enjoy the blessings of home. In every striking way, but easily, naturally, and

with no appearance of art, is the lesson impressed, that every thing made of life yields when the heart is warm and tender, and that there is no power, human or divine, which approaches the resistlessness of love.

One of the happiest of the author's creations is Petrea, with her active and scheming mind, where every thing is in disorder, and her kind and generous heart, where nothing is ever wrong. Her large nose is the burden she is doomed to carry ; but, though fully conscious of the misfortune, she is lifted above it by means of sympathy and affection. This same nose is a touch of nature ; it is difficult to realize how heavy the sense of some slight peculiarity of appearance often sits upon the soul ; it makes the sufferer, for such he is, feel as if all eyes were turned toward him ; as if there could be no subject of thought or conversation except his unfortunate nose. No small superiority of mind is required to save the heart from the disease of jealousy ; and the manner in which these fatal tendencies are resisted, and a wild and vagrant fancy tamed into eminent usefulness, is finely shown in this portrait, the original of which we have seen, though the painting was never attempted before.

Concerning Mrs. Gunilla and the Assessor, every reader will speak in high, but not unmeasured praise. The former, indeed, is perfect in her way, and her argument on the subject of the monads is perfectly satisfactory and convincing. The latter is, perhaps, more cynical than was necessary, though Mackenzie has drawn a character very like it in this respect, and the one in question appears like a sketch from nature. The Candidate is more open to exception ; or perhaps we should say, that such a Candidate would be thought more extraordinary than welcome in most families, his good-nature being hardly a balance for his easy epicureanism, and his religion apparently nothing more than a native goodness of heart. Slenderly equipped, to all appearance, the Candidate is, with those religious feelings which are commonly thought desirable in that sacred profession, and we cannot think that when he relinquished it, and became a teacher, the hopes of Christianity grew dim.

This is not the place to discuss the religion of these works, which, if practically true, is fantastically expressed at times ; but there is one thing to which familiarity must have made her insensible, but which is very offensive to the

taste and feeling of her readers ; we mean the allusion to solemn subjects in order to give point to a jest. If we were near enough to the author, we should assure her that the day of judgment is no laughing matter, nor is it well to surround so grave a subject with any ludicrous associations. The profaneness, too, which is found in such works as this, is perfectly astonishing in connexion with the moral purity, in other respects, of those from whose lips it proceeds. We are aware that there is much insensibility to this kind of transgression, though it implies a want of principle, like any other sin of indulgence. Some of those gentlemen, so called, who, in travelling through our country, vehemently berate it, because low people smoke and chew tobacco in the cars, will, in their very objurgations on the subject, offend all who are better than themselves, by their vile abuse of the sacred name ; little aware that, if the choice should be made between spitting and profaneness, the former vice, odious as it certainly is, is by far the least criminal and disgusting of the two.

One thing will surprise the inhabitant of New England in reading these works, and that is, the constant reference to drinking ; the Candidate takes his glass of Cogniac, as if it were part of his professional duty ; and the closing festival of "The Home" is celebrated by the extraordinary solemnity of drinking punch from a bowl over which the mother of the family presides, and each of the party in desperate happiness flinging his glass behind him. Truly, if these things are so, the King of Sweden will have no sinecure in his office of President of the Temperance Society ; it will require the power of a monarch and the nerve of an old soldier, to bring about the necessary reform.

It is needless to give extracts from books which, by this time, have been in the hands of all our readers. Nothing that we can say would add to the prevailing sense of their merit, and, if they were more open to objection than they are, no friend of humanity would wish to impair the prevailing enthusiasm, when their spirit is so unexceptionable, and their influence promises to be so happy. Not that we expect any great moral effect from the best fictitious writings ; for, as we have shown, not to injure is nearly their highest praise. But if they can stand in the way of positively injurious novels, in which the market always abounds, some of

those pernicious writers, who are not destitute of talent, may reconsider their ways, and be induced to choose a more excellent way to profit and fame. We take our leave of these works with the highest respect for the writer. The fireside is her field of fame ; no one has ever equalled her descriptions of its blessings, and her skill in tracing out the sources from which they flow. Home is a word soon spoken ; but there is no end to the variety of incident and condition which it embraces, of moral instruction which it may teach, or of mournful and affecting tragedy which can be seen in it by a prophet's eye. Since that high gift is bestowed on this author, may she use it with a sense of her responsibility, so that now, since her talent has made her equal to the highest, her conscientiousness and power of moral impression may set her above all other writers of the day.

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ART. VI.—*The School and the Schoolmaster. A Manual for the Use of Teachers, Employers, Trustees, Inspectors, &c., of Common Schools.* In Two Parts. Part I. by ALONZO POTTER, D. D., of New York. Part II. by GEORGE B. EMERSON, A. M., of Massachusetts. New York : Harper & Brothers. 1842. 12mo. pp. 552.

THIS book owes its existence to the judicious liberality of Mr. James Wadsworth, of Geneseo, in the State of New York, a gentleman of ample fortune and enlightened benevolence, whom age has not made insensible to the claims of the young, and wealth has not steeled against the wants of the poor. He has directed a copy of it to be placed in each of the school districts, incorporated academies and county clerks' offices of the State of New York, as well as in the hands of the governors of the several States, and of the deputy superintendents of common schools in the several counties of the State of New York. More than eleven thousand copies have thus been distributed. An edition of thirty-five hundred copies has also been struck off in Boston, at the expense of Mr. Martin